
AWARD OF THE BOSTON POST CANE

In December of 2007 the Boston Post Cane and a proclamation was awarded to Thelma Ward Chandler of Alton Bay, who was honored as Alton's most senior of senior citizens. The presentation was made by Alan Sherwood, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen with her family, the Selectmen and others in attendance.



Thelma Ward Chandler - 2007
Holder of the Prestigious Boston Post Cane

The odyssey of the cane dates back to August of 1909, when the editor of The *Boston Post* forwarded to the chairmen of the Board of Selectmen in various towns of New England a gold-headed, black ebony cane with the request that they present these canes to the oldest male citizen in their respective towns, compliments of Edward A. Grozier, editor and publisher of The *Boston Post*. Since then, that tradition has changed to award the cane to women as well. More than six hundred towns in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island were provided with these canes.

Unfortunately because many canes have been lost over the years, towns have been presenting duplicate canes while preserving the original. In Alton our original cane is located in a display case in the Heidke Conference Room at the Town Hall, the case also includes plaques inscribed with the names of the recipients. The display case was donated from the staff and contributors of MAIN STREET in 1987. Alton now awards a replica of the original cane.

The first Alton recipient of the cane was Morrison Bennett at age 93. Nancy Bennett Downing Merrill, his great-great grand-daughter, gave us some insight into her distinguished relative. Morrison was born in Alton the son of Benjamin Bennett Jr., and Lydia Morrison Bennett. He was a schoolteacher, a farmer, a practical lawyer and Justice of the Peace. In addition he served as a State Representative, Town Treasurer and an Alton Selectmen for 21 years.



Morrison Bennett - 1909
Holding the Original Cane

The custom of honoring our oldest citizen is appealing beyond the tradition of presenting the Boston Post Cane itself.

P.A.R.